

611
No. 18.

T H E
W A Y
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H E A V E N
M O S T C L E A R L Y D I S C O V E R E D :

A N D
The manner how to walk in this Way
exactly described.

With a brief Vindication of the
Church of England
Against all her Enemies.

By Nicholas Philips, late Chaplain to His
Majesty's Garrison in the Isles of Silly.

Isa. 30. 21. *This is the way, walk in it.*

L O N D O N, Printed for T. Brown, 1681.



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To my Dear Mother,
The Church of England.

Dearest Mother,

I Esteemed it a great happiness, that I had the honour to have my New Birth from thy Womb, and to be suckled up from my Cradle with the sweet Milk of thy sincere Doctrine. And if thou be not ashamed of such a Son, next to my Christianity, I esteem it my greatest glory to have had such a Mother.

But I esteem it a greater happiness, that I had the Grace given me to stick to thee in thy adversity, and not to leave thee, nor to turn from following after thee, when thou wert turn'd from a *Naomy* into a *Marah*, and all thy beauty and pleasantness was changed into deformity and sorrow.

But O I esteem it my greatest happiness, that upon the turning of thy Captivity, and the recovering of thy pristine Beauty and Splendour, thou hast not cockered me with thy Smiles and Favours (Prosperity being of all estates the most dangerous Enemy unto Piety) but kept me under with thy Frowns and Censures, the Furnace of Affliction, always causing the Fire of Piety to burn the brighter.

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

And though the unkindness of Friends wound deeper than do the Swords of Enemies; yet as no opposition of Foe could, so no unkindness of Friend shall, divorce me from thee. And I am as unseparably devoted to thee, as *Ruth* was unto her *Naomy*; The Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but Death part thee and me. And I am immutably,

Thy Dutiful and Obedient,

Though Unworthy Son,

Nich. Philips.

The Way to Heaven clearly Discovered, &c.

Acts 2:47.

The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.

THese words are the conclusion of the History, which St. Luke gives us, of the first gathering of the Holy Catholick Church by the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, immediately upon his glorious Ascension into Heaven, and the gracious Descension of the Holy Ghost upon them at Jerusalem upon the day of Pentecost.

Christs Church like a grain of Mustard Seed, unto which he compares it in the Gospel, *from a small Seed grew up by degrees into so great a tree,* that it was able in a short time, to afford sheiter and protection to the *Souls of the Air;* unto such as from all parts of the world, unto which the Air lies open; should repair unto it: And according to the prediction of the Gospel Prophet *Esay ch. 60. ult. his little one soon became a thousand; and his small one a great Nation.*

Christ at the first Gathering of his Church called only the twelve Apostles, *Mat. 10.* Afterward, he enlarged their number, by adding to them the 70 Disciples, *Luke 10.* After his glorious Ascension into Heaven, and when the Church was met together, for the chusing of an Apostle, into the room of the Traitor *Judas,* we find them increased to the number of an hundred and twenty, *Acts 1. 15.* But upon the gracious Descension of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles at Jerusalem upon the day of Pentecost, we find it to grow up so fast that on that very day as is testified here, *v. 41.* no less than 3000 Souls were added unto it.

And these 3000, being by the Apostles miraculous speaking of all Languages, gathered from out of all Nations under Heaven, were *Primitia Ecclesie Catholicae,* The First Fruits of the Holy Catholick Church. Hitherto the Church had been national, and singular, confined within the limits of the Jewish Nation, with whom God dealt better than with other people, gave his word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Ordinances unto

to Israel, *Psal.* 147. 19. But from henceforth it grew to be Catholick and Universal, extending it self into all Lands, and consisting of the Faithful in all Nations, who though divided in body, are united in Soul, knit together by Faith, as the Members of a Natural Body are by joynts and sinews in one Communion and Fellowship, in the Mystical Body of Christ, having all one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, *Eph.* 4. 5.

And that there is no salvation to be obtained by any one, of what people, nation or Language, of what Age, Sex, or Condition soever, that is not added unto, and made a Member of this Holy Catholick Church: The sacredly-inspired penman of the Holy Ghost, *St. Luke* here assures us, by telling us, That the Lord added to the Church daily, such as should be saved.

In handling of which sacred Maxim and Position I shall (Grace assisting me) shew you,

1. What the Church is.
2. That Salvation is not to be obtained any other way than by being added unto it.
3. That the principal Agent in this work of Salvation is Almighty God, and that it is the Lord that daily adds men unto the Church.
4. The means and instruments, which God ordinarily makes use of in this great work of Mans Salvation.
5. And lastly, the means which men, who are put into the state of Salvation, and added to the Church, must be careful to use, if they will keep themselves in the Unity and Community of the Church, and in the state of Salvation. And,

First, Of the Church.

Church is a word of various signification, and in several senses shall we find it used in holy Scripture; but chiefly it signifies, and mostly it is there used for the whole number of the Elect, that ever were or ever shall be in the world, in what place soever, either in Heaven or Earth, they are dispersed. So that this Holy Catholick Church consists of two principal parts:

1. Of the Triumphant part in Heaven, where the departed Saints, and such as are loosed from the burthen of the flesh, are rejoycing for the Conquest which they have gotten over the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; a singing continually of *Hallelujahs*, of Songs and Plains, and Thanksgivings unto God; for giving them the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Of the Militant part on Earth, where the living Saints are still a fighting against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; a fighting for their

their manifold frailties, and fleshly corruptions, and a longing to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

Now though this Militant Church of Christ be but one body, and Christ saith of his Dove, his undefiled one, *That she is but one. the only one of her Mother, Cant. 6. 9.* Yet as the vast Ocean, which is but one and the same Concourse of Waters, hath divers Appellations, changeth its Name, and is distinguished by the several Regions on which it borders; and there is the *Spanish* Ocean, the *British* Ocean, the *German* Ocean, all which make but one and the same Sea: So the Holy Catholick Church, which is but one body, hath divers names, and is distinguished by the several Countries wherein the Members of it reside; and there is the *Greek* Church and the *Latin* Church, the *English* Church and the *Dutch* Church, &c. who though they may differ from each other in some Circumstantial and Extrafundamental Points of Religion, yet so long as they agree in the Substantial and Fundamental Points thereof, have all one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, are all but Members of one and the same Holy Catholick Church. One and the same Sun shoots out from it many Beams of Light, one and the same Kingdom hath in it many Counties, one and the same Tree many Branches, one and the same Body many Members; so hath also one and the same Mytical Body of Christ, *one body but many members*, saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 12. 20.*

Now the true and infallible marks whereby a particular national Church may be known to be a Member of the Holy Catholick One, are (as our Church of *England* hath well said in her Articles of Religion, *Artic. 19.*) The word of God sincerely preached, and the blessed Sacraments rightly and duly administred, according to Christs Ordinance, and in what ever Congregation of men, professing the Faith of Christ, the word of God is sincerely preached, and the two Essential Sacraments of the Gospel, Baptism, and the Lords Supper, are rightly and duly administred according to Christs Ordinance, by persons lawfully called, sanctified, and set apart for the work of the Ministry, there is a true branch of the Holy Catholick Church, and with it may any one that professes himself a Christian, safely joyn, and from it must no man that lives within the bounds and limits thereof presume, to separate himself if he will obtain Salvation.

And that this Member of the Holy Catholick Church wherein we live, The national Church of *England* is such a Church, we need not make use of many words to prove, since that which is the best of witnesses, Her works most clearly approve and manifest it. Her Doctrines she confirms

confirms not by Traditions, Miracles or Dreams, by the Decrees of Councils, or Decretals of Popes, but by the Holy Scriptures, and the faith not, *Sic dicite Papa*; but *Sic dicite Dominus*. The blessed Sacraments, she neither sophisticates nor mutilates; neither adds to them, nor subtracts from them. In administering the Sacrament of Baptism, she makes no mixture of Salt, Spittle, Oyl, Milk, &c. but makes use only of pure Water, and the words of Consecration which Christ himself instituted, *Baptizing with Water, in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*. In administering of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, she doth not make a God of the Bread, and lift it up for the People to Worship and Adore; nor doth she think the Wine too good, for any but the Priests to drink; but having Blessed and Sanctified both Elements with the very words of Consecration which Christ himself used, she according to his Institution and Practice, delivers both Bread and Wine into the hand of every particular Communicant.

Charged is our Church on the one hand by the *Papists* with Innovation and Separation; and on the other hand by the *Presbyter* and *Sectaries*, with Popery and Superstition. And I shall crave leave in a word, to vindicate her against them both.

To the *Papists*, who charge us with Innovation and Separation, and ask us where our Church was before *Luther's* time, we say at *Rome*, though lying hid there under a great heap of *Papish* Trash; and *Luther* with his Associates did but that with better success, which others before them had attempted: As the *Berengarians* in *Italy*; the *Waldenses* in *France*; the *Hussites* in *Germany*; the *Wickliffs* in *England*, &c. shake off the Corruptiois and Superstitions of the *Romish* Innovators; but did not separate from and forsake the Orthodox, Primitive, Catholick Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*.

The Church of *England* holds no other Doctrine than that which the Church of *Rome* Primatively did, and which *St. Paul* taught them in his Epistle unto them, *viz. justification only by the blood of Christ*. If upon this Foundation the *Romanists* have built up a great heap of Wood, and Hay, and Stubble, added as things necessary to Salvation, The Adoration of Images, The Invocation of Saints, The Supremacy of the Pope, The lawfulness of Deposing and Murthering of Kings, Masses, Merits, Pardons, Purgatory, and a number of the like Trash, which were never prescribed by God in his Word, never practised in the Church of God, no, not in the Church of *Rome* it self, for the first Five Hundred Years after Christ, they, and not we, are the Innovators, we separated from them no farther than they separated from themselves, and their original purity.

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Let the Church of *Rome* return to her self and her original Purity, and though we will not down on our knees and honour her for our Mother, yet we will run with open Arms to embrace her, and will own her for our elder Sister. And though we will not give her a Supremacy over the rest of the National Churches of Christ, yet we will grant her a primacy in the Church of Christ; and because *Rome* was the chief City, and Empress of the World, her Bishop shall have the first place assigned him in a General Council, if ever the World be so happy as to have one again.

To the Presbyters and their spawn of Sectaries, who charge us with Popery and Superstition, and say that we have borrowed most of our Rites and Ceremonies from the Papists, we say,

That if nothing which the Papists believe and practise is to be believed and practised by us; we must go look for a new God, a new Christ, and a new Heaven, as well as a new Religion; for they believe all the Articles of the Three Orthodox Creeds, as well as we, hope to be saved by the same Christ, and to go to the same Heaven that we do.

When the Church of *England* separated from and renounced the Church of *Rome*, she did not separate from, and renounce what she received from the sacred Scriptures, from the four first general Councils and the Orthodox Fathers of the Church, but only from what she innovated; was brought in and intruded upon the Church of late years by the pride and avarice, the superstition and fopperies of the Popes and their Consistories, she piously separated the precious from the vile, winnowed away the Chaff from the Wheat, kept what she found pious and primitive, but rejected what she found to be superstitious and novel: Did not cast away both because the one was nought, and under pretence of reforming utterly deform Religion, did not run from one extrem into another, from Idolatry and the worshipping of Images into profaneness, and the not vouchsafing to worship God himself from a bad religion into no Religion.

She kept such a Decorum in her carriage, that when she repudiated and cast off the too too gawdy dress of the Babylonish Harlot, she leapt not straight with some of her Neighbour Sisters into the contrary extrem of a slovenly Garb, but having respect unto the Apostolical Canon, 1 Cor. 14. *etc.* she ordered all things in the publick worship of God, to be done decently and in order.

The Ceremonies used in our Church are not many and burdensome, but few and significant, such as tend to Edification and instruction, are not

B

Popish

Popish and *Superstitious*, but *Pious* and *Primitive*, have their grounds in the *Scripture*; the *Approbation* and *Practice* of *Antiquity*, and the *Church of Christ* in all Ages.

Come, come, be not more nice than wise, my over precise and scrupulous Bretheren; but become ye now at length wise unto Salvation. There is a better way sure to fly from one extrem than to run into the other, even to embrace the golden means that lye between: What the Church of *Rome*, as *Popish*, hath innovated, and is in her *Erroneous* and *Superstitious*, reject with us and forsake: But what the Church of *Rome*, as it was *Christian*, and a *Depository* of the *Sacred Truth*, hath received from the *Sacred Scriptures* and *Reverend Antiquity*, and is in her *Pious* and *Primitive*, embrace with us and practise. And let us become one, joyn hearts and hands, as well in practising the *Vertues* we find in the Church of *Rome*, as in opposing the vices and errors which we find in it.

Surely they who, for such things as are of an indifferent nature, and which every particular Church hath power to alter and change, to impose or abrogate, separate from our *National Church of England*, which I have proved to be a true Member of the *Holy Catholick Church*, expose their Salvation to a great hazard; for out of the Church, as saith my second position, there is no Salvation to be obtained; the Lord adding unto the Church daily such as shall be saved.

That the Church is *Via Regia*, the *King of Kings High-Way* to Heaven, and that there is no way for any one to obtain Salvation, but by being added to it, is most plainly demonstrated unto us by that which *St. Peter* 1 *Ep.* 3. 20. calls the Type and Figure of it, *Noah's Ark*: For as all the People that inhabited the *Old World*, excepting only those Eight Persons that entered into the Ark, perished in the Flood of Waters which God brought on the Earth; So all the people of the *New World*, who enter not into the true Ark, the Church, shall be consumed in that dreadful fire, wherewith God will one day burn up both the Heaven and the Earth. And therefore Baptism which is the Sacrament of initiation, the door whereby we enter into the Church, is by *St. Peter* *Ib.* v. 21. said to save us, as the Ark did those of the *Old World* that entered into it.

Illustrated also is this Truth unto us in Scripture by divers apt Similitudes and Comparisons.

Called is the Church, *Col.* 1. 18. *A Body*, of which Christ is the Head, and every true Believer a Member in particular: Now as the Head doth not impart his influences, and perform the Office of a Head to a

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no Member that is separated and divided from it : So Christ will not impart the Divine Influences of his Saving Grace, and perform the Office of a Saviour unto any one, but only unto such as are united and added to his Body the Church.

Compared is the Church to a Household, and called *Eph. 2. 19. The Household of God*; now as the *Pater Familias*, and Master of a Household, though he may out of charity sometimes give unto others, yet makes provision only for those of his own Family; so though God out of his immense bounty, and gracious goodness, imparts his general Mercies unto all creatures, preserveth both Man and Beasts; causeth his Sun to shine, and his Rain to fall on good and bad, just and unjust; yet his special favours, and singular graces he reserves only for those of his own Family the Church. He is good to *Israel*, but chiefly unto those in *Israel* who are of a pure heart, saith the Prophet, *Psal. 73. 1.* He is the Saviour of all men, but especially of those that believe, saith the Apostle, *1 Tim.*

4. 10.

Likened is the Church to a City, and called *Heb. 12. 22. The City of the Living God*. Now as a man cannot be protected by the strength of a City, and partake of the privileges and immunities thereof, unless he put himself within the Walls, and become a Citizen: So a Man cannot be protected by that strong City which hath Salvation appointed for its Walls and Bulwarks, but only such a one as is admitted into the *New Jerusalem*, and become a Fellow Citizen with the Saints.

Compared is the Church to a Mother, and called *Gal. 4. 26. The Mother of all True Believers*. Now as no one can live a natural life without a Mother to conceive, bring forth, suckle and nourish him; so no man can live a spiritual life, the life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, who is not begotten of the immortal seed of the Word, of his Mother the Church, regenerated and new-born, who is not fed and nourished up in sound Doctrine by the sincere Milk which issueth forth of her two Breasts, the Books of the Old and New Testament: And in this sense it is a trite and common saying among the Ancient Fathers, *That he shall not have God for his Father, who hath not the Church for his Mother*.

Likened is the Church by our Saviour, *John 15. 1.* to a Vine, of which as he there tells us he is the heart, his Elect the Branches, now as that Branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the Vine, *no more can ye*, saith he to his Disciples there, *v. 4. except ye abide in me*, intimating thereby most plainly, that unless we be ingrafted into Christ the true Vine, and added to his Church, we can have no true hopes of obtaining Life and Salvation through him. Since it is confirmed then unto us by such a cloud

of Witnesses, that out of the Church there is no Salvation to be obtained.

1. Gross and absur'd is the opinion of those Libertines who think a man may be saved in any Religion; So he live an outward moral civil Life. The Jew in his Judaism. The Turk in his Mahometism. The Heathen in his Paganism. They may as well say that a man might be saved in the Flood out of the Ark, by climbing up to the top of some House, or Tree, or Mountain. That a man being separated from the body may live, a branch Cut off from a Tree bear fruit.

2. Fearful and dangerous is the estate of those Atheists and sensual worldlings, who neither regard any Church, nor think on any religion at all, but live like beasts always grazing in the earth and never so much as lift up their hearts or eyes to heaven.

Ravenous Ravens may, I grant, find pleasure and present relief, out of the Ark. And profane Esauites, may think themselves happy enough in having plenty of belly cheer and temporal blessings. But the innocent spotless Dove when out of the Ark can find no place any where to set the sole of her feet on till she return thither again. And a true Israelite when he hath with King Solomon tryed all the things in the world, pleasures, riches, honour, will in the end conclude with him, that all worldly things are vanity and vexation of Spirit. And that there is no true content, nothing that can satisfie a mans mind, no hope of Salvation to be had any where, but in the true Ark of Gods Church.

3. Damnable is the estate, and on the very brink of hells pit are the feet of those Factionous and Schismatical Spirits, who out of pride and singularity of heart, or because they disgust some of the outward external ceremonies of our Church, forsake the Society of the faithful, separate themselves from the lawful allowed Church assembly, and repair to Conventicles and private meetings, where having no lawful allowed priests to officiate, they cannot have the word of God sincerely Preached; nor the Sacraments rightly administered according to Christs Ordinance; for though it be granted lawful for private persons within the limits of their own family to open and expound the Scripture according to their talent; yet he who without a lawful call and mission shall presume in a publick Congregation to handle and expound the word. Though he handle it never so well and expound it never so truly, yet doth he not preach nor is his Doctrine sufficiently qualified for the Salvation of Souls. For how can they Preach except they be sent, demands the Apostle, *Rom. 10. 15.* proving most plainly by this his interrogative

terrogative that effectual Preaching, such as is sufficiently qualified for the Salvation of Souls, is the proper work of the Ministry, of those that are lawfully Called and Sent forth to execute this publique function in the Church. And no man, as saith the Apostle, *Heb. 5. 4.* may take this hence to himself, but he that is called of God as was *Aaron* (i. e.) unless he have as *Aaron* had, not only an inward call and inclination of the Spirit, but also an outward one, and a solemn ordination to the sacred function.

4. Since there is no Salvation to be had out of the Church, and the Lord addeth daily unto the Church such as shall be saved ! Oh how infinitely are they bound to be thankful unto God, and alwayes to praise and bless his holy name, who find themselves to be placed in the state of Salvation, or made visible Members of the holy Catholick Church ; for it is not by their own natural inclination, nor by the care or piety either of their natural or spiritual Fathers, (though these be good helps and means) that men are placed in the state of Salvation and added to the Church, but by the exceeding goodness, mercy and grace of God. And it is as saith my third position, the Lord that daily adds unto the Church such as shall be saved. God is the principal agent in the great work of mens Salvation, he is the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the beginner and perfecter of every good work, yea he that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, as saith the Apostle, *Phil. 2. 13.*

Rebecca may look the Venison, but it is *Isaac* that must give the blessing ; *Paul* may plant and *Apello* may water, but it is God that gives the increase. He he it is, who perswades wild *Sapher* to come and dwell in the tents of gentle *Sem*, that being men, as the Apostle phraseth it, that were born Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, Strangers and Forreigners, to become fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God.

Now this work of mans regeneration, of his being begotten a new in the Gospel, and added to the Church, God works not extraordinarily, by miracle, but ordinarily by means. And the ordinary means which God makes use of for the perfecting of this great work, we may find here in this Chapter, by the means which he used for the making of this great addition to the Church of 3000 Souls, to be the word preached, faith to apprehend and belive it, and baptism to confirm and Seal it.

These primitive Converts had the word preached unto them by Saint *Peter* : And being convicted in their Consciences of the Truth of it, they

they believ'd it. And applying themselves to Saint *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles for advice what to do that they might be saved; they were prescribed by them the baptism of repentance for the remission of their sins. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, *v.* 38. And they as it is testified, *v.* 41. thankfully embraced his advice, gladly received his word, were immediately baptized, and on that very day there was an addition made unto the Church of no less than 3000 Souls.

And of these initiating grounding Ordinances and Graces I would more largely discourse, but that I remember you are persons, who being born of Christian Parents, and within the pale of the Church, are already by Baptism added to the Church, and made visible Members thereof; and therefore it is more seasonable and necessary to shew you the way and means which you must be careful to use, if you will keep yourselves in the Church and the State of Salvation; and this if you will do, you must take these Primitive Christians here at the *42. v.* for your pattern; For they being by Baptism added to the Church, continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread, and in Prayer.

And of these Four precious, preservative, confirming Christian Duties I shall now by Gods gracious assistance orderly discourse.

And first of the Apostles Doctrine: By the Doctrine of the Apostles is here signified that form of sound Doctrine, concerning Christ and his being the true Messiah promised unto the Fathers, which the blessed Apostles first *viva voce* in their Sermons and Harangues delivered unto the people, and afterwards for the instruction of the Church unto the worlds end, wrote in their Gospels and Epistles.

This contains in it all things necessary unto Salvation, both as to the *credenda*, and what we are to believe; and to the *agenda*, and what we are to do. And he who being by Baptism received into, and added to the Militant Church on earth, receives nothing as an Article of Faith, and necessary to be believed, but what can immediately be induced out of the holy Scriptures; and who in matters of Obedience resigns up himself wholly to the practice of those Rules and Directions, which are given us in the wholesom words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, shall not fail in due time to be made a glorious Member of the Church Triumphant in Heaven. And able are holy Scriptures to make a man wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus, as it is written, *2 Tim.* 3. 15.

Surely

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Surely he who to Heaven will be directed aright, must neither be guided by the false fire of the Conclave or the Conventicle, must neither rely on unwritten Traditions, nor on unwarranted Revelations; but must make that bright shining and unerring light, Gods holy Word, his onely Director and Guide, must neither add to it, nor diminish from it; must neither turn to the right hand and do more, nor to the left hand and do less, than is enjoyned him in the holy Scriptures. And accused be he, yea though he be an Angel from Heaven, that shall presume to preach any other Doctrine, contrary to that which the holy Apostles have delivered unto us, saith *S. Paul, Gal. 1. 8.*

A Treasury full of all manner of precious Stones is Gods holy Word, and there is no one of what condition or quality, sex or age soever, but hath his particular Rule given him in the Scripture, and may if he come to the hearing or reading of Gods holy Word, with an heart humbled and willing to be instructed, find what he in his particular vocation and calling must especially do and perform, what he must especially shun and avoid.

And 'tis indeed the Reformation of those Abuses which we commit in our particular Callings, wherein the power of Grace and Religion doth most especially appear. Religion, Religion, my Brethren, is not a thing merely of publick and common profession; it dwells not onely in Churches and Temples; no, it hath a principal respect to the well ordering of our particular and personal Callings; it saith to us as Christ did to the man in the Gospel, whom he dispossessed of a Legion of Devils, Go home to thy House, and let thy behaviour and carriage there, evidence and shew forth the truth and sincerity of thy Religion.

We read *Deut. 11. 20.* that the *Jews* were commanded to write Gods Law not onely on the Doors of their Temples, but also on the Doors of their Houses, that so they might meditate and think on it to do it, not onely on the Sabbath and holy Solemnities, when they were called upon to go up into the House of the Lord; but all the days of their life, and as oft as they went in and out at their own Doors; that so they might learn to regulate their personal Employments, and the works of their particular Callings, according to those Directions which are given by God in his holy Law. And 'tis indeed according to the ordering of our selves in our particular Callings, that God will proceed with us at the last day; and when summoned to appear before his dreadful Tribunal, we shall not be called to give an account of other mens Stewardships, but of our own, and how we have demeaned our selves in that state of life, wherein he hath been pleased to place us.

Surely.

Surely Brethren, if we who have the Gospel printed amongst us, Bibles at home in our Houses, and I hope read therein every day: If we who have the Gospel preached amongst us, and may if we be not sloathful and negligent on every Lords day, hear it expounded and applied in our Churches and Synagogues, would instead of curiously inquiring out of it with *S. Peter*, what is other mens duty and required of them, set our selves with *S. Paul* to inquire out of it what is our duty, and required of us in that station wherein God hath placed us; and let our selves sincerely about the doing of it, we should most clearly manifest our selves to be true Members of his Militant Church on earth, and should not fail in due time to be made glorious Members of his Church Triumphant in Heaven.

The second thing which you must learn of those primitive Christians; if after you have been added to the Church, you will continue and preserve your selves in the Church, is to continue stedfastly in the Apostles Fellowship. By Fellowship with the Apostles is here signified conformity unto them, in those laudable and decent Rites and Ceremonies, Customs, and Orders, that were practised by them in their Church Assemblies and publick Meetings. In which whosoever refuseth to have Community and Fellowship with that Church, into which he is admitted by Baptism, and of which he is made a Member, is void not onely of all Religion, but even of all Reason and common Civility.

The actions of Religion and Divine Worship are twofold, either Essential and ordinate, or circumstantial and subordinate.

1. The essential and ordinate parts of divine Worship are Faith and Holiness of Life, and our Rule for this must be Gods Holy Word, and we must receive nothing as an Article of Faith, a thing absolutely necessary unto salvation, which cannot be immediately deduced out of it.

2. The circumstantial and subordinate Actions of Religion, are the time, the place, the vesture, the gesture, which are required to be observed in our performance of Church Duties; and these things being not absolutely determined of God in his Holy Word, are left to the determination of the Church: And God in that general warrant which he has given the Church, *1 Cor. 14. ult. Let all things be done decently and in order*, hath impowred her to cut out and shape each particular decency and order, as will best suit with the condition, the comeliness, and the edification of every particular National Church: and it is no more necessary that all Churches should observe one and the same Rites and Ceremonies, than it is that all Nations should wear one and the same kind of cloaths.

Surely these Orders and Ordinances, Rites and Ceremonies, which by our lawful Superiors, we are enjoined to observe in our Church meetings and Assemblies, though they cannot immediately be deduced out of Gods Holy Word; yet if they be not contrary unto it, but serve for decency and comeliness in the service of God, are part of those Ordinances of men, unto which we are commanded by St Peter, 1 Ephes. 2. 13. to submit for the Lords sake: And therefore though pride or arrogance, contempt or neglect, to violate and break the established Order of the Church, is to be guilty of no less crime than Disobedience to the Commands of God; Indeed the word *κοινωνία* which our Translators here render Fellowship, is the very word, which St. Paul, in the 1 Cor. 16. 3. useth to signify the Collections and Contributions, which were made for the poor, and that in this sense it is to be taken here, is the opinion of the incomparable; judicious Dr. Hammond in his Annotations on that place.

Piously, indeed with great praise to themselves, and much comfort to the afflicted, Members of Christ were Collections for the poor ordained by the Apostles to be used in their Church meetings, As I have given order unto the Church of Galatia, Even so do yee (saith St. Paul) to his Corinthians, 1 Cor. 16. 1 on the first day of the week, Let every one lay by of his store as God hath prospered him for the poor.

And though the practice of this Apostolical, Primitive, and most Christian duty be strictly enjoined in our Liturgy, to be used on every Lords day, and solemn Festival, and after the Sermon is ended, the Priest is required to return to the Lords Table, and thereby reading some Select portions of Scripture, to stir up the people to acts of Alms-giving, Charity and Piety; yet to the eternal stain of the Piety and Charity of our Priests and people be it spoken, it is but in very few places observed.

Many of our Priests who seem to be zealous observers of the Liturgy of our Church, are notwithstanding to save their own purses, and because they will not give good example unto others, very loose in practising this principal part of it, and rarely or never (unless upon some extraordinary occasion) do they stir up their people to Almsgiving, and Charity, exposing themselves thereby to that woe which our saviour in the Gospel pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat. 23. 23. for their strict observing the lesser matters of the law, the tying of Mint, Annise, and Cummin, and their neglect of the weightier matters thereof, the practise of Judgment, Mercy and Faith.

And though most of our people think that their ready and cheerful paying of these rates, and taxes, which are required of them, for the re-

lief of the poor and the repairing of the Church, will excuse them for not giving any thing at the Offertory; yet they must know that in paying these rates and taxes there is nothing of Religion, more then obedience unto the Law, and it is no more than Turks and Pagans, if they lived amongst us, should pay, or than the Hereticks and Schismatics that do live amongst us, do pay. God approves of no forced oblations and nought but Free-Will offerings will please him: and therefore if you will find favour in his sight, and be accepted when you present your selves before him, you must not come empty handed, but must bring your presents with you when you come into his Courts, saith David, *Psal.* 96. 8. your gifts when you come to his Altar, saith Christ, *Math.* 5. 13.

Never, Oh never think brethren, that God who hath given you all that you have, will accept at your hands those cheap sacrifices of Prayer, Praise, or Hearing, that cost you but a little lip and ear-labour. You know who it was that said, It is a more blessed thing to give, then to receive. And there is assuredly more of Christianity and true Religion in one merciful tender hearted, compassionate act of mercy and charity, than there is in the fruitless hearing of an hundred Sermons, or in the vocal uttering a thousand Prayers and Praises.

And verily, if men would but spare something out of their weekly superfluities and idle expences, to bring with them on Gods day, to Gods house, there to offer it up unto him as a Testification of their gratitude, and thankfulness unto him for the many Mercies he hath bestowed upon them, they would find it so far from impairing, that it would improve their estates, and draw down a blessing upon all the works of their hands: The

3. Thing that we must learn of these Primitive Christians, if we will keep and preserve our selves in the Church and in the State of Salvation, is to be constant Guests at Gods holy Table, and to continue stedfast in the breaking of bread, for they, &c.

By breaking of bread is here signified the holy Communion and the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, in the Celebration of which, for our better apprehension of his Death and Passion, and to set him forth as it were evidently crucified before our Eyes, our Lord commanded that bread should be broken, and Wine poured out, and delivered to the Church and Congregation of the Faithful.

Breaking of bread and eating of bread are oft, I grant in the Old Testament used to signifie, an ordinary and common meal; but in the New Testament, especially after our Saviours instituting of his holy Supper,

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it is used to signify the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord; and in this sense it is not only used here, but also in *Act* 20. 7. And in this sense it is still used by some of our Sectaries, who usually express the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, by the terms of breaking of bread.

And verily the thankful remembrance of his Death, which Christ hath required of us, *so oft as we eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup,* should to manifest the gratitude that lodges in our heart, and that we always carry about in our Bodies, *the dying of the Lord Jesus,* be always (i.e.) as oft as opportunity is offered, celebrated in us.

Seldom met the Fathers of our Faith, the Apostles, and primitive Christians (especially on the Lords Day) but they had with the Word preached and Prayer, the Holy Sacrament also administered among them: And in imitation of this Apostolical primitive practise, it is the constitution of our Mother the *Church of England*, That the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper, should in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches (where there are many Priests and Deacons, who being Christs menial Servants ought chiefly to commemorate his Death) should on every Lords Day and Festival be administered in Oppidal and great Congregations monthly; in Rural and the least Assemblies quarterly: And to mind the people of this most Christian Duty, and to shew his readiness to administer, if the people were piously disposed, to receive the Holy Sacrament, is the Priest by the Rubrick of our Church enjoyned on every *Lords Day and Festival* to stand at the Communion Table, and there to read all the Communion Service appointed for that Day.

No greater testimony assuredly can any man give of his Christianity, and that he is truly thankful unto God for giving his Son to dye for his sins, and hopeful by virtue of his death to escape eternal death and damnation, than when he finds joy and delight and spiritual pleasure, in that great mystery of our Religion, the oft communicating and feeding on the Body and Blood of his Saviour, the only means which he hath ordained, to make us always mindful of what he did and suffered for us. This this, the truly Pious man wishes, might not only be his yearly, quarterly, and monthly food; but even his daily bread; and he is even sick of spiritual hunger when he comes to the Church and finds not a Communion there.

And surely they who when the Holy Sacrament is administered in that particular Church and Congregation, whereof they are members, refuse (without some lawful cause, and impediment) to come and Com-

municate with the Church, *ipso facto Excommunicate*, and put themselves out of the state of Salvation. The,

4. Thing which we must learn of these primitive Christians here, is to continue stedfast in prayer. *For they, &c.*

By Prayer, is not here meant private prayer, the prayers that are composed by private persons, and said in private places; but by prayer is here meant publick or common Prayer, the Apostles Prayer, the Churches Prayer; such Prayers as by the Apostles, and their Successors the Governors of the Church are composed for the use of the Church, with which all the Congregation are well acquainted, in which they may all safely joyn, and unto which they may all chearsfully say, *Amen.*

Prayer is indeed a Duty unto the performance of which God hath oft in Scripture made promise of Salvation, but no Prayers are so acceptable unto him, or so pleasant with him, as are publick and common prayers: And never are his ears so open to hear, nor his mercy so ready to grant requests, as when he is called upon in the voice of his Church, and all the Congregation of the faithful joyn together in prayer with one Accord, as did the Apostles, *Acts 1. 14.* when with one voice, and one heart, with one mouth, and with one mind, with the same words, and the same Spirit, they presented their Supplications unto him.

And though some of our Priests, who are more observant of the Peoples humour, than of the Constitutions of the Church, and seek rather to gain applause to themselves, than glory to their God, use according to the *Gen. va. Made*, a private spirited Prayer of their own conception, in the publick Congregation, before their Sermon; yet in so doing they not only cross the practice of the primitive Church, which never allowed any thing to be said before the Sermon, but the *Lords Prayer*, or *Gemma Salvatio*, but also the Orders and Constitutions of our National Church, which instead of allowing any such thing, expressly forbids it in her 55 Canon: no private spirited prayer then being allowed to be used in our Church, no such Prayer can be used, without wilful and manifest contempt and disobedience, which as we are assured, *1 Sam. 15. 22.* will not be the best of Sacrifices and make them unacceptable unto God.

And as no Prayers ought to be said in the publick Congregation, but the Apostles Prayer, the Churches Prayer, Common Prayer; so in the performance of this Duty, we must be stedfast and permanent, and with these primitive Christians, continue stedfastly in prayer: And surely such an Apostolical; *Acts 2.* a primitive, such a religious way of serving God doth our Church prescribe in her Liturgy, that she endeavours to make our whole Life Angelical and Divine; for it not only prescribes

a Form of Prayer to be used, on Sundays and Holydays, but a Form to be used on every day of the week. And the Curate that ministrereth in every particular Church or Chappel of this Nation, is bound by the Rubric of the Church, daily Morning and Evening to say Common Prayer in the Church wherein he Ministrereth.

To be the Lords Remembrancer daily morning and evening, to mind him of the peoples wants, and to intercede for them, is, what ever the world thinks of it, the chief and principal part of the Priestly office: But alas such Priests are liere now a days as rare to be found, as black swans: And the world had not more cause of old, to complain of unpreaching Ministers, than she has now of unministring Preachers, most Ministers contenting themselves with a single preachment on the Lords day, altogether neglecting the principal parts of their Priests office, daily morning and evening to offer up unto God the Prayers and Praises of the Church in behalf of the people.

I know the Priests are wont to lay the fault on the People, and to say that they will not come to joyn with them in Prayer, on the week days; and the People again retort it back upon the Priests, and say that they will not be constant and continue in the practise of this duty: But to speak truth to the shame of both parties, it is from the profaness and impiety, the worldliness and wickedness that now a days harbours in the hearts, both of Pastor and People, that this Heavenly employment is altogether neglected amongst us, and men can find time for the doing of any thing, rather than the service of God. But let him go (what ever he be) both for a worldly and a wicked one too, who thinks he can make better use of his time, than to bestow it upon God, and his service, or that any part of his time is better spent, than that which is spent in his house in Prayer and Praises.

A man may I gra:t build a Church in his bosom, and serve God in his heart, though he never cloath his thoughts with words, and he doth so whenever with holy Hannah he prayeth silently in his heart unto God. A man may build a Church at his beds side, and he doth so, whenever he doth humbly prostrate himself in prayer before God. A man may make a Church of his House, and he doth so as oft as he there with his Family offers up the Sacrifice of Praise and Praise unto God. But oh! it is the highest exaltation, the noblest Devotion of a truly pious Soul, when it praiseth God in his Sanctuary, praiseth him in the Congregation of his Saints; and he is with David, Psal. 122. 1. *Even travaished with joy and gladness,* whenever he is called upon to go into the House of the Lord to perform this.

Pray

Pray, pray, pray, my beloved Brethren, always, in all places, and upon all occasions, but by no means neglect ye the publick Prayers of the Church. Carry always about within you good thoughts and pious meditations, and live ye holily and well, so shall you make a Temple of your bodies, and have always a Church within you. Govern well your own families, and bring up your Children and Servants, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and let the Boon offering of prayer, and praise be daily Morning and Evening, offered up there, so shall you always dwell in Hallowed ground, and have with *Philemon*, a Church at home in your own house. But O let your feet never fail to to tread Gods Courts, and to frequent his house of prayer, when ever publick common Prayer (though nothing else) be said there, so shall you manifest your selves, to be Gods meial and household servants; and shall not fail to partake of the blessings which he hath promised, *Psal.* 84. 5, to those that dwell in his house and are always praising him,

Gloria in excelsis Deo.



FINIS.

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